Socialist Worker

AN OPEN LETTER TO ALL DEMOCRATIC LEFT MEMBERS

Dear friends,

If you decide today to enter coalition with Fine Gael and Labour we believe it will be a bad blow for the left and for future working class struggles.

The argument for entering coalition is that you can apply your principles to make improvements to workers lives.

But any small gains a Democratic Left Minister could obtain have to be set against the fact that you will be taking responsibility for a government with a severe anti-working class agenda.

Remember the last Fine Gael - Labour coalition of 1983 to 1987?

That was a government which introduced cuts in the building of schools, hospitals and housing.

The rich got richer, with corporation tax falling 1%, while workers saw the introduction of tax on social welfare, children's allowance and a 1% levy.

When the government came into office they said that 170,000 unemployed was unsustainable and the figure would have to fall. When they left office it was 210,000.

They were also responsible for the Criminal Justice Bill which allows the Gaurds to hold people for 48 hours without charges.

Worst of all, for five years they managed to hold back public sector pay.

Fine Gael have exactly the same agenda today. Already they are making it clear that their main agenda is to cut back on government spending.

They are a right wing party, with multi-millionaire backers like Tony O'Reilly.

If your TD's allow this government to take shape, if they vote for John Bruton for Taoiseach, then no matter what concessions they obtain, you are going to find yourself hated by the very people you aim to represent.

Imagine six months from now big marches and strikes by public sector workers in defence of their living standards.

Instead of building the resistance, encouraging solidarity, and taking the movement forward - you will be giving cover to John Bruton.

The same anger that TEAM Aer Lingus workers currently feel towards the betrayal of Labour will be directed at Democratic Left.

This would be a tragic scenario, as the opportunities for the left in Ireland have never been greater.

With the Church Hierarchy losing all authority, with Fianna Fail exposed as a party of corruption, the next few years present a great opportunity to establish a strong socialist movement.

Whatever government does form, it will be a weak one.

Are you going to be backing the government or workers in future conflicts?

We would much prefer to see your TD's giving voice to opposition than to shielding John Bruton.

We would much prefer you to be working with us in promoting solidarity for workers struggles than absent because your hands are tied.

Democratic Left have moved a long way from the days of the tax marches.

But the tradition of organising that scale of resistance is one to be proud of, and one which won the Worker's Party a lot of loyalty from workers.

The Socialist Worker's Movement is taking up that tradition.

We urge you to stay out of government and help build opposition to the right.

Yours fraternally,
Socialist Worker

If you would like to find out more about the SWM or get regular copies of *Socialist Worker*, then ring us on (01) 872 2682 or return this slip to PO BOX 1648, Dublin 8.

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